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007
BOND IS BACK
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MISSING MAN'S MOTHER STILL HAS HOPE
metroNEWS

SEARCHING FOR COLTEN PRATT

Tories mum on sudden meeting halt

MANITOBA

Nomination process stopped after new info 'came to light'

Manitoba Progressive Conservatives wouldn't say Thursday why a nomination meeting was abruptly halted just after party members cast their ballots.

Tories in the Assiniboia constituency in west Winnipeg were choosing between candidates Michael Bailey and Robert Harper Wednesday night when they were suddenly told the votes would not be counted and the nomination meeting postponed indefinitely.

"Last night's candidate selection meeting in Assiniboia was adjourned so party officials could look into some new information that came to light," was the party's response in a statement from MLA Bonnie Mitchelson, who is on the selection committee. She rejected interview requests.

Tory Leader Brian Pallister was scheduled to speak at the meeting, but did not attend. He said he did not know any details. "I was just let known not to bother coming because the meeting wasn't going to happen," he said.

"The nominating committee let me know that there were some concerns about the meeting. "

Two party sources said that voting was stopped because of concerns that memberships sold by at least one candidate may not be valid. The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the votes were not counted and people in the room were left wondering what will happen next.

The two candidates have not spoken publicly. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news

"Because it's 2015" quip gets international recognition. **Canada**

Inventor says he's cooked up food's next big thing

BUSINESS

Nutrigrill has the backing of some pretty big names

Dave Baxter
Metro | Winnipeg

A Winnipeg inventor believes he's created the next big thing in home cooking, and he's got big names backing him up.

Phil Poetker, along with his partner Barry Belog, invented the Nutrigrill, an electric BBQ that can cook meat at high temperatures, while cooking vegetables and noodles at lower temperatures all at the same time.

The people who believe in the product could bode well for its success, as it has the backing of Kevin Harrington, who has appeared on Shark Tank and is the founder of As Seen On TV.

Iron Chef America judge Donatalla Arpaia, and The Biggest Loser trainer Brett Hoebel have also endorsed the product.

"And Kevin has told me he really thinks this could be as good or better than the George Foreman grill," said Poetker.

A trip though Asia was the inspiration to create the product, said Poetker.

"Both my business partner and I saw eating in North America as a really diminishing thing, because you walk down aisles and aisles of frozen food," said Poetker.

"Yet if you travel in Asia it's all fresh, so we noticed this type of cooking that incorporates meats and vegetables at the same time, and we're talking about copious amount of vegetables."

About 5,000 Nutrigrills have already been sold just though promotion on social media, and Poetker said people have told him they eat a lot more veggies after buying one.

"So the calories go down and the nutrients go up."

Poetker hopes the product succeeds not only for his bottom line, but also to show the kinds of creative and unique things that can come out of Winnipeg.

"Creativity comes from this place. We're isolated a lot of the time so the ones that really succeed really have to work at it."

Thirty-minute Nutrigrill infomercials will now be launched in the U.S., and Winnipeggers will be able to check out the product this fall and winter at stores that will pop-up at Portage Place, St. Vital and Garden City Shopping Centres.

Nutrigrill inventor Phil Poetker and Catherine Li give a Nutrigrill demonstration in Winnipeg on Thursday. DAVE BAXTER/METRO

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

New laws get the final OK

New laws governing electronic cigarettes, veterinary bills and other items received final approval Thursday as the Manitoba legislature ended a session that started a year ago.

One will ban the use of electronic cigarettes in indoor public places except for stores that sell the product.

The bill originally would have permitted so-called "vaping" in bars and other adult-only locations, but Healthy Living Minister Deanne Crothers said it was changed following public hearings this summer.

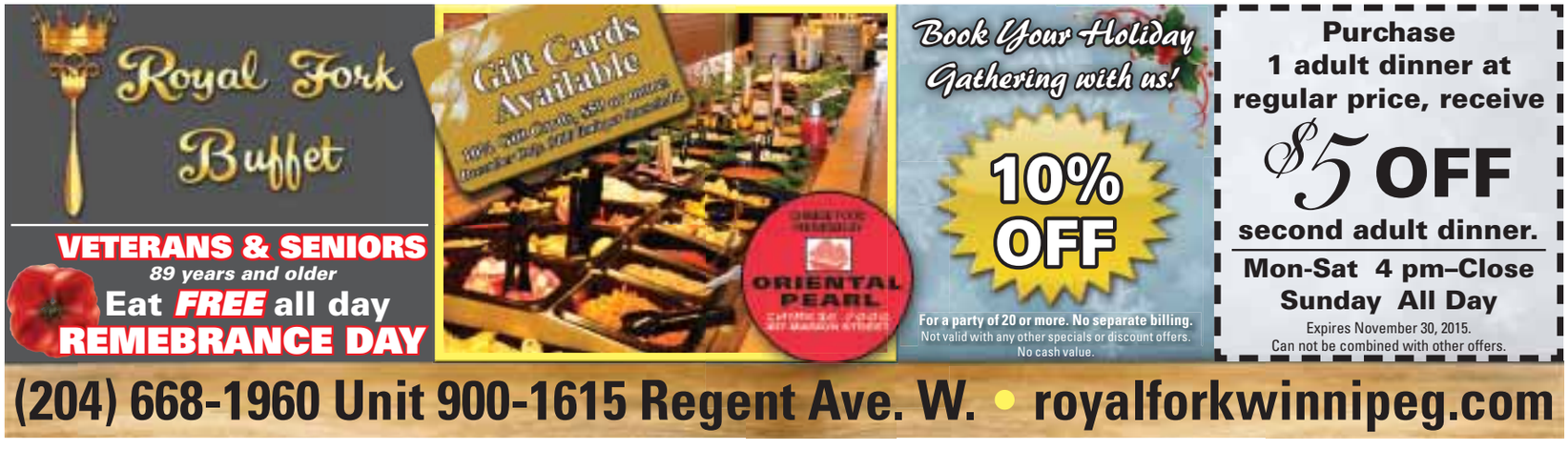
"One of the messages I heard loud and clear from hotels and restaurant associations was that they did not want to have this on their shoulders, that they did not want to be the ones making policies," she said.

Other new laws include requiring veterinarians to provide upfront estimates of their services, and tougher penalties for impaired drivers.

Premier Greg Selinger said a highlight is a law that will make it easier for victims of sexual cyberbullying — people who have had intimate images shared on the Internet without consent — to sue the perpetrators.

The legislature will break for several days before reconvening for the annual throne speech on Nov. 16. The throne speech will lay out the government's plans for the months leading up to next April's provincial election.

THE CANADIAN PRESS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More released on missing man

DISAPPEARANCE

Police say Colten Pratt may have been seen on Nov. 7

Meg Crane
For Metro | Winnipeg

Colten Pratt vanished one year ago and his mother, Lydia Daniels, says the WPS have told her they are still actively investigating his disappearance. CONTRIBUTED

One year ago, Lydia Daniels spoke to her son, Colten Pratt — something she did every day.

Then he vanished.

Daniel's worst nightmare started on Nov. 6, 2014. That evening, Pratt sent his mother a Facebook message telling her he made friends at the Marlborough Hotel in Winnipeg and was having fun.

She told him she was worried and to be careful.

"The last thing he said to me was, 'I know,'" Daniels said Thursday.

She said her 26-year-old two-spirit son was brave, athletic, smart and always making people laugh.

"Anyone who met Colten became friends with him right away. He was very trusting of people, finding the good in people. Which sometimes got him into some trouble."

Pratt came to Winnipeg from Long Plain First Nation to get into the music industry, she added. While working towards that, he spent his time volunteering with several organizations, including with homeless shelters and with people with disabilities.

He was supposed to volunteer at the Winnipeg Santa Claus Parade, but went missing before the event.

"Trying to live each day without him being in our lives has been a challenge, but it's something that we need to try to deal with and accept for now, until he comes home," Daniels said.

His family decided something was wrong after he didn't contact family for three days, a move Daniels called unusual.

In the past year, his family has handed out flyers, put up posters and organized ground searches.

"We did a vigil in January as well just to get Colten's name out into the public's eye, maybe have people go back and search their minds," Daniels said.

She says the Winnipeg Police Service Missing Persons Unit has also been working on the case, reassuring her that they are still actively investigating.

Winnipeg police said Thursday they recently received information that Pratt may have been seen in a bus shelter on Main Street and Redwood Avenue early in the morning on Nov. 7.

CASE DETAILS

- On Nov. 6, surveillance cameras place Pratt at the Liquor Mart on Ellice Avenue.
- Pratt was last seen leaving the Regal Beagle alone around 9:30 p.m. Nov. 6.
- Before going missing, he sent his family a selfie with a woman. She was tracked down and ruled out as a suspect.
- Pratt is aboriginal, 5'10 tall, roughly 160 pounds with a thin build, short brown hair and brown eyes. He was last seen wearing a grey T-shirt, brown plaid jacket, blue jeans and a grey tuque.
- Anyone with information is encouraged to call police at 204-96-6250.

COURT

New trial date set in 30-year-old case

A date has been set for a new trial in the death of a Winnipeg girl 31 years ago.

Mark Edward Grant is scheduled to be tried on a charge of second-degree murder in January 2017.

Grant was convicted of killing 13-year-old Candace Derksen in 2011, but the Manitoba Court of Appeal overturned the conviction in 2013, and that ruling was later upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada.

The higher courts said the trial judge erred in not allowing the defence to present evidence that pointed to another possible killer — an unidentified man involved in a similar attack while Grant was in custody.

Candace's body was found in a storage shed near her Winnipeg home six weeks after she disappeared.

The Crown announced earlier this year it would seek a new trial, and the victim's mother has said she still believes Grant is the killer.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Candace Derkson, 13, was found dead in a storage shed six weeks after she disappeared. HANDOUT

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Poet Maurice Mierau latest nonfiction work explores some unusual figures. HANDOUT

Poet as celeb biographer

BESTSELLER

Winnipegger also writes about lives of lesser-knowns

Meg Crane
For Metro | Winnipeg

A Winnipegger's new book of poetry portrays some unusual subjects — like Britney Spears and Michael Jackson — and it's getting some attention.

Maurice Mierau's new work, called Autobiographical Fiction, is one of the Top 10 paperback fiction books at McNally Robinson Booksellers right now.

"I was tremendously amused," said Mierau when he found out. "I like genre confusion."

The book of poetry is a series of nonfiction biographies written by Mierau about both famous and not-so-famous people. He even travelled to the University of Minnesota to research for his poem about Jerry Berryman (who is also a poet) and spent many hours in the Winnipeg Public Library collecting facts for other poems.

Several of the poems are about celebrities who aren't usually thought of in a poetry context, such as Michael Jackson and Posh Spice.

"I've now written two poems in two separate books about Britney Spears, which is probably pretty creepy for a middle-aged man," he laughed.

He chose to write about celebrities and other well-known people to explore delusion.

"I'm interested in characters who believe things that aren't true, often about themselves. They do so as a way to cope with trauma or with potential trauma," Mierau said.

He added his poems are not supposed to be condescending towards anyone, even the more superficial celebrities he writes about. Rather, the collection is a comment on his belief that everyone relies on delusion to some extent to get through life.

"The same things that make it possible to empathize with the difficulties of Victoria Beckham and Britney Spears are there, too, when you approach a story like Geraldine Beardy being murdered in the OK grocery store in 2010, which I have a poem about as well," Mierau said.

Three other poems in the collection have connections to people from Manitoba who many Winnipeggers would know.

> **I'm interested in characters who believe things that aren't true, often about themselves.**
> Maurice Mierau, author, Autobiographical Fiction

TRENDS

Going grey: Drivers like subtle colour

Figures from Manitoba Public Insurance suggest motorists in the province have opted for shades of grey instead of bright and flashy when it comes to the colour of their vehicles.

The Crown insurer says more than 180,000 drivers are currently behind the wheel of a registered vehicle that sports some variation of grey.

Black is a distant second, followed by white, red and blue.

MPI says blue ruled the blacktop in 1996, followed closely by red, but times and tastes changed.

Five years later, grey-silver cars topped the popularity list — a trend which has yet to hit the brakes.

Drivers of light trucks have a taken a different turn, however, as white is currently the most popular colour, then grey. THE CANADIAN PRESS/CJOB

Grey is a preferred paint choice for Manitoba vehicles. TOYOTA CANADA

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He might be city's biggest music fan

CONCERTS

Computer consultant takes in 6 to 9 shows weekly

Meg Crane
For Metro

Computer consultant Alan Moulding is self-employed partially so he has the flexibility to go to as many of Winnipeg's music shows as possible.

"Winnipeg has the most vibrant music scene for a city of its size," Moulding said.

He's travelled to see musicians but spends most of his money locally, going to between six and nine shows a week.

He won't name musicians he likes because he's concerned about leaving some out.

"There are a number of artists I've seen 30 or 40 times," Moulding said in an interview with Metro. He did admit he's seen Romi Mayes perform around 100 times and owns all of her albums.

Moulding knows how to calculate where the best sound will be in a venue, based on the direction of the speakers. He can tell you that at the West End Cultural Centre, you should sit in the middle of the third row. But that's not where you'd find him.

"If you're front row, you can actually hear the voices as opposed to the speakers," Moulding said. "Some of the shows, I'm five feet from them."

Being close also allows him to get better photos. You'll see Moulding at every show with a small camera that fits in his pocket, taking pictures that he doesn't plan to ever show anyone else.

He estimated he has more than 10,000 photos stored on SD cards but added the photos aren't very good because he doesn't use a flash.

"The bands don't like flash," Moulding said.

One day, Moulding might organize and label the images, but for now he's too busy planning his weekly lineup and calculating how long it will take to get from one show to another.

Alan Moulding in the former Zion Swedish Lutheran Church, where he recently waited for an evening show. MEG CRANE/FOR METRO

> **"Winnipeg has the most vibrant music scene for a city of its size."**
> Music fan Alan Moulding

FOOTBALL

Argos to laud Bombers coach

Dave Baxter
Metro | Winnipeg

The Argonauts will honour Winnipeg Blue Bombers head coach Mike O'Shea this weekend in Toronto when the Bombers take on the Argos.

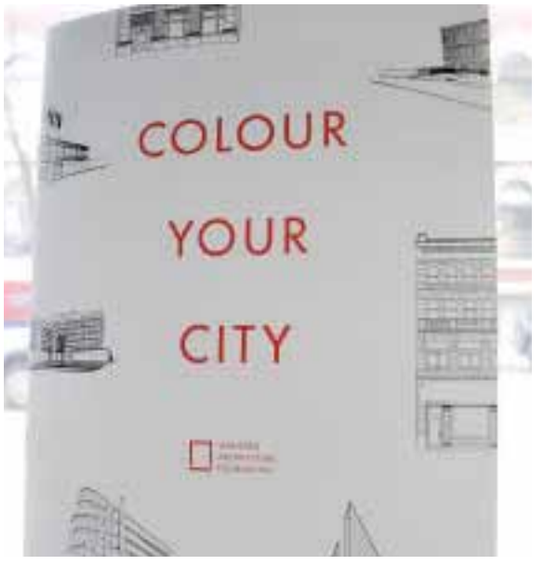
O'Shea will be recognized by the Argos at a halftime presentation at Rogers Centre during Friday's game.

The former Argonauts linebacker will have his name and number added to the All-Time Argos list following his 16-year playing career, 12 of which were spent with Toronto.

O'Shea won three Grey Cup championships as a player with Toronto and earned another as their special teams co-ordinator in 2012. He is still the club's all-time leading tackler.

O'Shea is second on the CFL's all-time tackles list with 1,151, was a five-time East Division All-Star and was named a CFL All-Star and the league's Most Outstanding Canadian in 1999.

Winnipeg Blue Bombers head coach Mike O'Shea. METRO FILE



Colouring books are highly popular, and the Winnipeg Architecture Foundation hopes theirs, featuring Winnipeg buildings, will prove a hit. MEG CRANE/ METRO

Shades of Winnipeg

DESIGN

WAF presents architecture-themed adult colouring book

Meg Crane
Metro | Winnipeg

The Winnipeg Architecture Foundation (WAF) is hoping adults will get out their pencil crayons.

Susan Algie, executive director of WAF, said the group thought one way to encourage appreciation and awareness of buildings in Winnipeg was to put out a colouring book based around city architecture.

"We hope that people enjoy colouring the buildings and are inspired to go see them in person," said Algie.

The book, titled Colour Your City, includes a variety of images by Winnipeg architects and graphic designers.

"Some of the buildings are well known, such as the Legislative Building, and others are more modest but still of a good design," Algie said.

The colouring book is meant for people of all ages who are interested in history and architecture in Winnipeg.

"Colouring books are very popular this year," she added. She visited Tate, an art gallery in the UK, this fall and says she saw about 50 colouring books there.

"We thought it important that Winnipeg have one unique to our city."

It's an idea that she conceived and that WAF has been planning for some time, although she says it would not have been completed without the help of WAF's designer and illustrator, Robyn Shesterniak, who did many of the designs in the book.

If the book sells well, Algie says the WAF will consider putting out another, focusing on specific building types or eras.

IN BRIEF

Back lane windrows won't be ploughed in Winnipeg
The city of Winnipeg will continue its policy of not clearing windrows in back lanes. Coun. Russ Wyatt pushed for back lanes to have windrows cleared at a Public Works committee meeting, but the committee accepted a city report that will see windrows ploughed on front streets only.

Coun. Janice Lukes said Winnipeg back lanes are typically narrow making the job of clearing windrows complicated. Lukes said the city will push for people to use the Snow Angels program. DAVE BAXTER/METRO

ST. NORBERT

Farmers' market to stay open in winter

Winter is fast approaching, but that won't mean the end of the St. Norbert Farmers' Market.

The market will now move indoors and run bi-weekly all winter long.

The Eagles Club, which sits across the road from the outdoor market site, will be home to the indoor market starting Nov. 7. METRO

30

More than 30 vendors will set up at the first indoor market, with products ranging from vegetables to meats to baked goods to artisan crafts.

SLUGLINE

Payday company fined in The Pas

A payday loan company in The Pas has been fined $5,000 for handing borrowers too much cash.

The province said that on Sept. 16, an administrative penalty was issued to 5117951 Manitoba Ltd, which operates as The Pas Title Loans, for entering into payday loan agreements with borrowers for amounts that exceed the allowable proportion of their net pay.

Manitoba's Consumer Protection Act can hand out administrative penalties of $5,000 for a first contravention, $10,000 for a second, and $20,000 for a third or subsequent contravention. METRO

IN BRIEF

Canada signs several side deals amid TPP text release
Canada has signed almost two dozen side letters with its trading partners in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, including an agreement with the United States to combat illicit trade.

Canada also has a side agreement with Japan that appears to protect the exports of British Columbia logs, a key sticking point between the two countries. The letters were released as the text of the broader TPP agreement, finalized Oct. 5 by a dozen Pacific Rim countries, was released Thursday by the New Zealand government. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trudeau loosens reins on diplomats
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has unshackled his top diplomats. Trudeau sent a letter Wednesday to the ambassadors and high commissioners of Canada's foreign missions telling them he and his cabinet will be relying on their judgment and insight to advance Canada's foreign-policy goals.

The letter marks a reversal of the strict message control that Harper imposed on his top diplomats over much of the past decade. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Puppet maker boosting political engagement
Textile artist Gabe Thirlwall started a collection of handmade political finger puppets after moving to Ottawa eight years ago as a way to encourage political engagement. Now she's thinking about a redesign to turn the long-haired, open-shirted Justin Trudeau puppet into one that better resembles Canada's 23rd prime minister. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Power stays top-heavy

REFORM ACT

Liberal MPs defer decision to dilute PM's influence

Newly minted Liberal MPs have passed on their chance to give backbenchers more clout and dilute the powers of their leader.

Under the Reform Act passed by all parties last spring — and supported by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — each party's MPs were supposed to choose at their first caucus meeting after an election whether to adopt rules aimed at rebalancing power between MPs and their leaders.

Among other things, the rules would allow backbenchers to trigger a leadership review and potentially to oust their leader altogether.

But at their first caucus meeting Thursday, Liberal MPs chose unanimously to defer a decision on the rules until party members could weigh in on the matter at a national convention scheduled for late May.

"A number of the elements that were proposed in the Reform Act, in our view, weaken the role of the membership of the party," government House leader Dominic LeBlanc said following the caucus meeting.

"Our leader was not selected simply by a vote in caucus. Our leader was selected by an open, democratic process of members … and supporters. So we didn't think it was appropriate at the first meeting of a new caucus to do something that would massively change the authority and the leadership that we've vested in the volunteers and the members of our party."

MPs agreed unanimously that such a dramatic change should only be approved by delegates to the next national convention, he added.

The decision to defer the matter came even as Trudeau is promising to empower MPs from all parties, bolster parliamentary committees and reverse the centralization of power in the Prime Minister's Office.

The Reform Act was the brainchild of Conservative backbencher Michael Chong, who watered down a number of his original proposals in order to win all-party support, including adding the caucus opt-in provision.

For a caucus that opts in, the act specifies that a leadership review vote can be triggered if 20 per cent or more of a party's MPs request it. A subsequent majority vote by MPs against a leader would be sufficient to force a leadership contest.

The act also gives MPs the power to decide if an errant colleague should be expelled from or readmitted to their caucus, something traditionally the exclusive preserve of the leader. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trudeau holds his first caucus meeting on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Thursday.
SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL

Trudeau triumphs over Trump in Forbes ranking
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is the 69th most powerful person in the world, according to Forbes magazine.

The newly elected Liberal leader is three places above U.S. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump in the annual list.

Stephen Harper did not feature in 2014.

Russian president Vladimir Putin has the top spot this year, ahead of the chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, and U.S. President Barack Obama. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MEDIA

'Because it's 2015' grabbing headlines

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's succinct "because it's 2015" explanation of his new, half-female cabinet has attracted international attention.

The New York Times, Newsweek, Slate, the NBC Nightly News website and various other U.S. news organizations reported on Trudeau's swearing-in on Wednesday, including his retort to a reporter when asked why having a cabinet with an equal number of men and women was important to him.

Newsweek cited a United Nations study to note that with Trudeau's gender-equal cabinet, Canada will now rank No. 4 in the world in terms of percentage of women in ministerial positions, tied with France and Liechtenstein. It was previously in 20th place, according to the UN Women report. Finland is No. 1.

Even some celebrities waxed poetic.

"Why a gender balanced/50:50 government? 'Because it's 2015!' Coolest thing I've seen in a while. Love U Canada," actress Emma Watson, of Harry Potter fame, wrote on Twitter. THE CANADIAN PRESS

"He's picked 15 men and 15 women — the first gender-balanced ministerial team in the country's history.
Excerpt from Britain's Telegraph

NOV 7-13

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STATISTICS

Liberals to reinstate long-form census

The portrait of Canada is being restored.

Just a day after taking office, the Liberal government announced Thursday that the mandatory long-form census — axed by the Conservatives in 2010 — will be reinstated for the 2016 census.

"Today, Canadians are reclaiming their right to accurate and more reliable information," said Navdeep Bains, the newly named minister of Innovation, Science and Development.

With the next census, communities will "once again have access to high-quality data they require," said Bains, the MP for Mississauga-Malton.

He portrayed the decision as the first step of the Liberals' commitment to "open and fair government."

The announcement rolls back one controversial decision by Conservatives and one that prompted critics to charge that the Stephen Harper government was turning its back on fact-based decision-making.

During the census — done every five years — most Canadian households get an eight-question form. However, a longer, more detailed, 61-question form was distributed to one-in-five households.

With questions on everything from income, cultural heritage, education, work habits, even details of where people live, it gave researchers a rich source of data to build an understanding of Canadian society. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CONFIDENTIAL

In 2010, the lengthy census form was scrapped by the Conservatives, who said its questions were intrusive, even through the data is kept confidential.

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HILL TOP RESEARCH

Surrounded by members of caucus, Rona Ambrose speaks after being named as the interim-leader of the Conservative party following a caucus meeting Thursday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ambrose in as CPC leader

OPPOSITION

Alberta MP set to take on job with new tone, fresh attitude

Alberta MP Rona Ambrose stepped into Stephen Harper's leadership shoes Thursday — albeit on an interim basis — as the Conservatives gathered for the first time since last month's election demoted them to the official Opposition.

Ambrose, who served as health minister in the last Parliament, had campaigned on a promise to bring a respectful and civil tone to debate in the House of Commons.

"I'm excited that we are going to be moving forward with a strong opposition with confidence and optimism," she said, flanked by fellow Conservative caucus members chanting her name in support.

Ambrose, 46, was first elected to the House of Commons in 2004 and went on to serve in several cabinet posts under Harper.

One personal challenge she faces is her ability to speak French — while she does speak some, she is not fluent. On Thursday, she deferred to caucus colleague Steven Blaney, although she did attempt to answer one question in French.

> **We feel very confident about our chances in the next election.**
> Conservative interim-leader Rona Ambrose

But the major political task ahead of Ambrose will be to rebuild the party heading into the eventual formal leadership race, likely still a long way off.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NOVA SCOTIA LEGISLATURE

Liberal minister dismissed from cabinet, caucus

Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil says Environment Minister Andrew Younger has been relieved of his duties and kicked out of the governing Liberal caucus.

Thursday night's announcement came after Younger didn't show up to testify at a trial for a woman who was accused of assaulting him. Younger says he didn't appear in court because of a law that states sitting members of the legislature cannot be called to testify in civil and criminal matters without being asked to waive the exemption.

The judge dropped the charge against Tara Gault, who pleaded not guilty to the charge stemming from an alleged assault on or about Oct. 22, 2013.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MYANMAR

'I'll be above the president'

Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said she will be the true power above the country's president if her party wins historic elections this Sunday, circumventing a constitutional clause that bars her from the top job.

"It's a very simple message," Suu Kyi said. While another member of her National League for Democracy party would hold the presidential title, "I'll be above the president... I'll run the government." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1 Aung San Suu Kyi speaks
Myanmar's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the media at a press conference at her home in Yangon, Myanmar. MARK BAKER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS.

2 National League for Democracy
Supporters of Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy hold up their hands during a NLD rally in Yangon. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

3 Rally in Yangon
While the NLD party is expected to triumph at key elections this year, Suu Kyi's pathway to the presidency is blocked by a clause in Myanmar's constitution. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

PLANE CRASH

Russia, Egypt say no bomb on Metrojet

Five days after a Russian jetliner broke apart high above the Sinai, Russia and Egypt on Thursday dismissed Western suggestions that a terrorist bomb may have caused the crash that killed 224 people, saying the speculation was a rush to judgment.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said he had grounded all British flights to and from the Sinai Peninsula because of "intelligence and information" indicating a bomb was the probable reason a Metrojet Airbus A321-200 plane had crashed in the desert.

President Barack Obama said the U.S. was taking "very seriously" the possibility that a bomb brought down the plane.

His comments, in an interview with a Seattle radio station, followed an earlier statement by White House spokesman Josh Earnest, who said the U.S. can't rule out the possibility of terrorism.

The Islamic State group, which has not generally pursued "spectacular" attacks outside its base in Syria, has claimed responsibility for bringing down the plane, but Russian and Egyptian officials say the claim was not credible. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Obama apologizes for hospital bombing
Wounded Taliban fighters were being treated in a Doctors Without Borders hospital in northern Afghanistan that was bombed by U.S. forces last month. President Barack Obama apologized for the attack. The U.S. military said the airstrike was a mistake.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former justice minister linked to 2014 shootings
Ukraine's Security Service says former Justice Minister Olena Lukash has been detained in connection with deadly shootings during opposition protests in 2014. More than a hundred people were killed on and around Kyiv's Independence Square.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Migrant influx on the way: EU

GLOBAL POLITICS

Three million refugees by end of 2016 predicted

The European Union is predicting that three million migrants could arrive in the 28-nation bloc by the end of next year, with the refugee emergency already proving a stern test of EU border and reception capacities.

The arrivals are imposing costs for shelter, rescue operations and border security, but the EU estimates that the refugees are likely to bring economic benefits within a few years, notably in Germany, one of the preferred destinations for many people.

EU autumn economic forecasts released on Thursday show that based on current migrant entries and a "technical assumption" about future flows, arrival rates for migrants are unlikely to slow before 2017.

Despite the figures of refugee increases, the European Commission predicted that the population across the 28 EU nations would only rise by about 0.4 per cent. No obvious impact on employments levels is likely, it said.

"You cannot say that this influx of refugees is likely to have a negative impact, or some kind of a shift of kicking other people out of the labour market," the EU's top economics and finance official, Pierre Moscovici, said.

However the EU said the real impact on national budgets is difficult to predict, given a lack of complete and reliable data about exactly who is arriving in the bloc and whether they are staying.

Most people are arriving in Europe through Italy and Greece, while Hungary and Austria have been affected by heavy migrant flows. Germany and Sweden are also feeling the impact.

Those nations, among others, want the EU to apply its budget rules with flexibility, taking into account Europe's biggest refugee emergency in well over half a century, and avoid reprimanding member states for excessive spending and deficits.

The Commission said Thursday that Sweden, which has the highest share of refugees per capita and wants its EU partners to host some of the refugees arriving on its territory, is likely to feel the economic impact most, perhaps 0.5 per cent of its gross domestic product this year.

Other hard-hit migrant transit and destination countries are likely to see an impact of 0.2 per cent of their GDPs in 2015.

Brussels pointed out that Germany and others would benefit in coming years from a boost in spending and the creation of more jobs. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

700K

More than 700,000 people have come to Europe seeking sanctuary or jobs so far this year.

Hawaii scientists speed up evolution in coral reef

CONSERVATION

Researchers hope strains thrive in newly harsh oceans

Scientists at a research centre on Hawaii's Coconut Island have embarked on an experiment to grow "super coral" that they hope can withstand the hotter and more acidic oceans that are expected with global warming.

The quest to grow the hearty coral comes at a time when researchers are warning about the dire health of the world's reefs, which create habitats for marine life, protect shorelines and drive tourist economies.

When coral is stressed by changing environmental conditions, it expels the symbiotic algae that live within it and the animal turns white or bright yellow, a process called bleaching, said Ruth Gates, director of the Institute of Marine Biology at the University of Hawaii.

If the organisms are unable to recover from these bleaching events, especially when they recur over several consecutive years, the coral will die. Gates estimated that about 60 to 80 per cent of the coral in Kaneohe Bay has bleached this year.

"The bleaching has intensified and got much more serious," said Gates of the coral around the bay. Where they once looked for the bleached coral among the healthy, Gates said her team is now "looking for the healthy individuals in a sea of pale corals."

Gates and her team are taking the coral to their centre on the 29-acre isle, once a retreat for the rich and famous and home to television's Gilligan's Island, and slowly exposing them to slightly more stressful water.

They bathe chunks of coral that they've already identified as having strong genes in water that mimics the warmer and more acidic oceans. They are also taking resilient strains and breeding them with one another, helping perpetuate those stronger traits.

The theory they are testing is called assisted evolution, and while it has been used for thousands of years on other plants and animals, the concept has not been applied to coral living in the wild.

Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology researcher Jen Davidson places a tray of enhanced coral onto a reef during a practice run for future transplants in Hawaii's Kaneohe Bay off the island of Oahu last month. HUGH GENTRY/VULCAN INC./THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **We've given them experiences that we think are going to raise their ability to survive stress.**
> Ruth Gates

"We've given them experiences that we think are going to raise their ability to survive stress," Gates said. She said they hope to see these corals, which will soon be transplanted into the bay, maintain their colour, grow normally and then reproduce next summer.

In early October, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said that coral reefs worldwide are experiencing bleaching, calling the event extensive and severe.

"We may be looking at losing somewhere in the range of 10 to 20 per cent of the coral reefs this year," NOAA coral reef watch co-ordinator Mark Eakin said when the report was released. "Hawaii is getting hit with the worst coral bleaching they have ever seen."

And this is the second consecutive year Hawaii has experienced widespread bleaching.

Scientists say some coral has already fallen victim to global warming. About 30 per cent of the world's population has already perished as a result of above-average ocean temperatures, El Nino's effects and acidification.

Gates and her team understand the challenges of scalability and time. Having success locally does not necessarily mean they will be able to scale their project to address a massive, global marine crisis before much of the world's coral reefs are already gone.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GUANTANAMO BAY

Morocco defends jailing

Morocco's justice minister on Thursday defended the country's decision to hold a former Guantanamo inmate behind bars for at least two months, dismissing claims of diplomatic assurances that he would be freed.

Lawyers for Younis Chekkouri say they were given promises from the U.S. State Department that he would not be held for more than 72 hours upon his return to Morocco from the U.S. detention centre in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Moroccan Justice Minister Mustapha Ramid disputed this.

"There was an agreement, but it did not include anything about his release," he said.

Chekkouri was captured by Pakistani authorities in December 2001 and held in Guantanamo without charge for 13 years.

He was released as part of a renewed push by President Barack Obama to release Guantanamo prisoners deemed to pose no threat.

Chekkouri has been held in a prison outside of Rabat since his transfer to the country on Sept. 16, also without charge. A judge on Wednesday ordered him to stay in custody pending a new hearing Dec. 3.

In response to a question from The Associated Press about the condition that Chekkouri would not be held for more than 72 hours, Ramid said, "Where are you getting this information? This is wrong."

"Did the Americans consult with us when they held him all this time?" Ramid said with regard to Chekkouri's time in Guantanamo.

"They have their laws and matters, and we have our laws and our institutions."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Taiwanese president meets with leader of China

Taiwan's president said Thursday he hopes this weekend's historic meeting with China's leader can ease Beijing's hard-line stance on diplomatic relations with Taiwan, which is now recognized by just 22 countries.

Saturday's meeting in Singapore is the first between the leaders of the two formerly bitter Cold War foes since Taiwan split from mainland China in 1949 during the Chinese civil war.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

South African student steals bus to get to final exam

South African media say a high-school student stole a bus in a desperate effort to get to his final-year mathematics exams.

Broadcaster eNCA reported Thursday that Le-Aan Adonis got behind the wheel when the driver failed to show up. A traffic officer stopped the bus a short distance from the school and fined Adonis 5,000 rand (about $361). The students arrived on time for their exam. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISRAEL

Netanyahu spokesman made to apologize for Obama insult

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's newly appointed spokesman apologized Thursday for a series of insulting comments about U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry, days before his boss heads to Washington on a fence-mending mission.

The apology from Ran Baratz, issued by Netanyahu's office, cast a cloud over Monday's visit. Netanyahu and Obama have had a chilly relationship over the years, and the meeting is meant in part to repair ties after repeated clashes over the U.S.-led nuclear deal with Iran.

In Washington, the State Department called Baratz's comments "troubling and offensive" and claimed the prime minister had promised to "review" the appointment.

Netanyahu announced Baratz's appointment as his chief spokesman late Wednesday — and soon after, old Facebook posts emerged in which Baratz suggested that Obama is anti-Semitic and that Kerry cannot be taken seriously. He also derided Israel's popular president as "marginal."

"I have just read Dr. Ran Baratz's posts on the Internet," Netanyahu said in a statement. "Those posts are totally unacceptable and in no way reflect my positions or the policies of the government of Israel. Dr. Baratz has apologized." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OUTRAGE

Human-rights lawyer questions discrepancy

Cori Crider, lawyer for Chekkouri from rights group Reprieve, said, "Either U.S. State Department officials repeatedly deceived me and my client about Morocco's true intentions when my client was in Guantanamo, or Morocco is a country that makes diplomatic promises freely and breaks them just as fast. Why isn't this being made a major issue in U.S.-Moroccan relations now?"

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Canada

Child survives shooting

MAINE

Rampage left girl's parents, aunt, killer all dead at home

A three-year-old girl was the only survivor of a shooting rampage in which a gunman killed the girl's parents and his own girlfriend in an apartment before taking his own life in Oakland, Maine, police said Thursday.

The girl was in the custody of her grandmother Thursday as state police detectives sought to determine what caused the deadly outburst.

"The task that investigators have is to try to find out what sparked this violence, what set this man off. At this point we don't have answers but we're going to work very hard to get them," said Stephen McCausland, spokesman for the Maine Department of Public Safety.

Law-enforcement officials received a number of 911 calls Wednesday evening, including one from one of the women who'd been shot and later died.

A police officer walks outside a home in Oakland, Maine, where two women and a man were shot to death. Police say the gunman shot himself outside the residence and was found in the driveway. ROBERT F. BUKATY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police identified the victims as the child's parents — Amanda Bragg, 30, and Michael Muzerolle, 29 — and Bragg's sister, Amy Derosby, 28.

Derosby's boyfriend, Herman Derico, 42, shot them in an apartment before killing himself in the driveway, police said. A 9mm handgun was found next his body. McCausland said the gunman has no arrest record in Maine.

> **We don't have answers but we're going to work very hard to get them.**
> Stephen McCausland

Jason Thomas, a next-door neighbour, said Thursday that he heard two gunshots and called 911. He then heard a man yell, "I told you this was going to happen!" He said he heard a woman pleading, "Please don't, please don't."

Then he heard two more shots before police arrived. After hanging up with the 911 operator, Thomas said he called Michael Muzerolle's phone and Amanda answered.

"I said, 'Are you OK?' She said: 'No, I can't move. Can you please help me?'" Thomas said.

The phone went dead, and no one answered when he redialled.

A 911 call from Derosby gave first responders "valuable information," McCausland said. The state police tactical team entered the home and discovered the child and two bodies on the first floor; they re-entered later and found a third body, also on the first floor, he said.

They all shared the brown clapboard home, which was divided into two apartments. Bragg and Muzerolle lived downstairs with their daughter, and Derico and Derosby lived upstairs.

The landlord lived in the back of the home in a third unit. He declined to comment. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CALIFORNIA

Attacker acted on his own

A freshman who stabbed four people at a California university meant to do more harm but acted alone and had no connections to terrorists, authorities said Thursday.

Faisal Mohammad, 18, burst into class at the University of California, Merced, and attacked a fellow student with a hunting knife Wednesday. He stabbed three more, including a construction worker credited with preventing him from killing anyone, before police shot him dead as he fled across campus.

Police found zip-tie handcuffs, duct tape and a hammer in a backpack near his body. It also contained two plastic baggies of petroleum jelly, which Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke called a "poor man's" explosive.

School spokeswoman Lorena Anderson said it's unclear if Mohammad targeted anyone in particular in the class required of all university freshmen. All four victims are expected to survive. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Weak loonie shouldn't mean staying home

TRAVEL

Tour firms offer bonuses for quick sale of packages

All-inclusive vacations limit out-of-pocket expenses in U.S. dollars on the trip. CONTRIBUTED

A weaker loonie means the price for Canadians to escape the snow and ice for the warmth of the sun this winter is going to be more costly than it has been in recent years.

But travel experts say that planning ahead and starting your search for the perfect beach holiday now will save you money.

Travel agent Omar Guechtal of the Flight Centre travel agency says booking early is the surest way to save this year.

He says tour companies have been looking to sell out their packages as early as possible.

"So what they've done is they've incentivized their packages with early booking bonuses, reduced deposits, added perks, free seat selection or other bonuses that you can get by booking early."

Guechtal says tour companies sign contracts for hotels and flights negotiated in U.S. dollars, even though the packages they sell are priced in Canadian currency.

Choosing an all-inclusive vacation or a cruise can be another way to save because you will limit the out-of-pocket expenses you might have to pay while on your trip.

In addition to booking early, Guechtal says Canadians can also look to save money by paying for amusement-park tickets or extra excursions that may not be included in an all-inclusive package ahead of time.

If you can pay in Canadian dollars before leaving, you may avoid costly credit-card foreign-exchange fees or surcharges that come with using bank machines to withdraw cash.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

INVESTING

Five provinces ease crowdfunding rules

Five of Canada's securities regulators have released a joint policy that makes it possible for businesses and individuals in five provinces to raise money and sell stakes in their businesses through crowdfunding.

Websites like Kickstarter, Indiegogo and Patreon have made it easier for U.S. entrepreneurs to raise money from large numbers of people at a time. Unlike those crowdfunding platforms, which provide no equity in the ensuing product, the new rules pave the way for Canadian businesses to use crowdfunding to sell equity.

Now Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have exempted crowdfunding from some of the requirements of traditional fundraising methods such as an IPO. Crowdfunding platforms will have to meet certain criteria in order to register as a funding portal and will be responsible for background checks and other due diligence.

Investors will be limited in how much they can invest relative to their income and net worth.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Telus cutting 1,500 jobs

Wireless provider Telus Corp. is cutting 1,500 positions, saving as much as $125 million each year. At the same time, Telus told shareholders it would raise their dividend payments by five per cent to 44 cents per share, starting in January.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

market minute

DOLLAR 75.94¢ (-0.07¢)

TSX 13,558.78 (-103.04)

OIL $45.20 US (-$1.12)

GOLD $1,104.20 US (-$2.00)

NATURAL GAS: $2.364 US (+10.2¢)
DOW JONES: 17,863.43 (-4.15)

Protesters demonstrate against the Energy East and Line 9B pipelines in Montreal last month. THE CANADIAN PRESS

ENERGY EAST PIPELINE

TransCanada nixes terminal in Quebec

Quebec will no longer host an oil export terminal for TransCanada's controversial Energy East Pipeline, the Calgary-based company announced Thursday.

Six months after abandoning a proposal to build a terminal northeast of Quebec City, TransCanada said it would amend its proposal to the National Energy Board to include a new route for the pipeline.

The company made the decision after "conducting thorough studies and consulting with many local communities," Energy East president John Soini said in an interview.

The pipeline is unpopular in Quebec and served as political fodder during the recent federal election campaign for the anti-Energy East Bloc Québécois, which said the project brings only risks to the province with none of the benefits.

While ditching plans to export crude from Quebec, TransCanada said it will ensure refineries in Montreal and Quebec City are still able to access domestic crude from Energy East. The $12-billion project is scheduled to be completed by 2020.

Soini said the pipeline will have 500 long-term jobs and add $1.19 billion to the Quebec government's coffers during the exploitation phase.

But Premier Philippe Couillard said the company has yet to demonstrate the economic benefits for his province.

Couillard reiterated Quebec cannot just serve as a passageway for TransCanada.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

THE ROUTE

Endpoint is Saint John

TransCanada plans to build a 4,600-km line to transport 1.1 million barrels of Alberta crude as far east as Saint John, N.B, home to Irving Oil's massive refinery and the only planned export terminal for the project.

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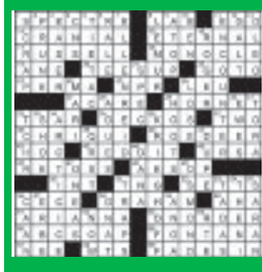

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9	6	8	4	2	5	3	7	1
5	4	7	1	3	6	8	9	2
1	3	2	7	9	8	4	6	5

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
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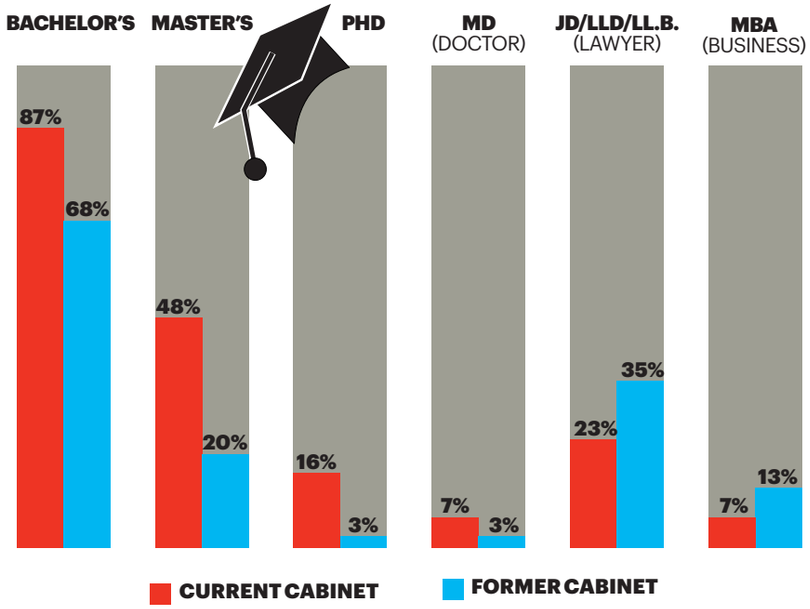
THE BIG THING: THE STACKED CABINET

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been packing his front bench with a high-powered cast of highly qualified MPs — a lieutenant-colonel, a CEO, an astronaut — but how does the expertise in the new, leaner 31-seat cabinet compare to the 40-member team the Conservatives had when the writ dropped in August? We crunched the numbers on members' scholastic success, then and now.



COMPILED BY METRO FROM PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION

CABINET HIGHLIGHTS

KIRSTY DUNCAN
MINISTER OF SCIENCE
Holds a Ph.D. in geography; member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007

JANE PHILPOTT
MINISTER OF HEALTH
Family physician for more than 25 years, including nine in West Africa; holds a master's degree in public health

JOHN McCALLUM
MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP
Former chief economist of the Royal Bank of Canada and dean of arts at McGill University

When we legalize pot, let's be chill about it

Diane Baker Mason
For Metro

In the opening scene of the 1994 film Pulp Fiction, two affable hired killers discuss the legalization of marijuana. Vincent (the well-travelled one) tries to distill the complicated Dutch hash-bar laws by describing pot as "legal but not 100 per cent legal." You can own it, he explains, and you can smoke it, but you can't buy or sell it. His companion

Sound, enforceable legislation will take thought, care and time.

is baffled. Why does it have to be so complicated?

Why indeed? While this scene from a 20-year-old movie remains applicable to many Canadians' contemporary understanding of cannabis users (that they are criminals using a dangerous drug), most Canadians believe that pot should be legalized. Many point to the relative harmlessness of the drug and to its many medical uses. Those benefits were recognized in Canada by the Marijuana for Medical Purposes Regulations issued by Health Canada in 2013, a narrow decriminalization that took years of legislative caterwauling to bring into force. Since then, there's been no serious chance of further decriminalization. At least, until now.

Now that we have our shiny new prime minister, the issue of legalizing pot is again being passed around. Legal, regulated use is now only a matter of time, although Trudeau cannot say how much time. When asked recently, he indicated it could take years to draft, create and implement the new regulatory scheme. After decades of debate — during which many other jurisdictions globally have decriminalized and even completely legalized cannabis — are we in for another long wait?

Probably. Legalizing pot is not simply a matter of amending the Criminal Code, as Pierre Trudeau's government did in 1968, removing prohibitions against homosexuality and birth control. Pot smoking has an intoxicating effect (obviously), and there do need to be controls on its use and sale. The nature and scope of the controls need to be identified and legislated. Then there is the tax revenue: an entire legislative scheme of collection, reporting and distribution. There's far more to it than just declaring pot to be "legal but not 100% legal."

Sound, enforceable legislation will take thought, care and time. Legalization is on the new government's agenda. At this point, there is no reason to keep asking the PM when pot will be legalized. The legislation will come in time. In the meantime, we should all just chill out.

And if you have difficulty chilling? Well, I know a guy...

Diane Baker Mason is a Toronto-based novelist, writer and retired lawyer.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Liberal-arts majors have a kindred spirit in the prime minister

Liberal-arts majors, rejoice. You've got a prime minister in your ranks.

The situation reminds me of this thing I had about bananas when I was a kid. One day, I ate a banana, and then when I lay on my stomach and tried to touch my toes to my head, I succeeded. It was an early ah-ha moment, and I continued to eat bananas before trying to touch my toes to my head until I lost interest. But it was a sad day, years later, when I ate a banana and broke my back.

So, Justin Trudeau may have a bachelor's degree in literature from McGill and one in education from the University of British Columbia, but he didn't win by investing in his education: he won by investing in being a Trudeau and then running a damn fine campaign.

That's not to say there's nothing of benefit to a banana, or an arts degree. In fact, Trudeau's education appears to be playing a role in his leadership style.

Take his exhaustive attention to ensuring a diversity of voices — plurality being an ethic at the heart of liberal arts — via the most diverse cabinet we've ever seen. And before you scream "Quota!" let's note that pundits are generally cheering the ministers' depth of experience in their respective portfolios, bemoaning only — if anything — that some lack experience in politics.

Take also Trudeau's keen sense of dramatic scene-setting. The tedium of a swearing-in ceremony (watching 30 people repeat the same words and shake the same hands) became a jaunty celebration for the masses gathered outside Rideau Hall, drawing comparisons to the Kennedys' Camelot. If it is just political propaganda, it's of the public-inclusive, liberal-arts variety.

He made the connection himself, to school-aged kids, telling them his education degree informed his plans to "listen as much as he speaks" and be a mentor-prime minister, helping the cabinet members and Canadians "solve those challenges and get their answers."

Of course, personality informs leadership. And it's also not always true that degrees predict a prime minister's leadership style. Last time, we got an economist who ran the country based on ideology and hated data so much that he cut the long-form census and hollowed out science libraries.

But don't worry: the census is back. Which means that if you do happen to have an arts degree, and you do wonder what that means for your career prospects over time, just keep an eye on Statistics Canada. It'll be tracking that.

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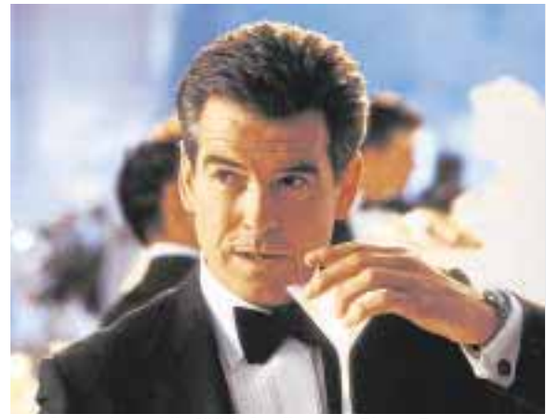


While most people would say Sean Connery made the best 007, Richard Crouse's vote goes to Roger Moore. Daniel Craig is also a popular choice, while 1990s leading man Pierce Brosnan seems to be a less popular choice with the general public. HANDOUTS

Who made the best Bond?

MOVIE STARS

People's favourite 007 often the one they saw first

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

Who's your favourite James Bond? This weekend Daniel Craig suits up again, taking his fourth spin as the super spy in Spectre. The film's overseas reviews have been very strong and it will likely dominate the weekend's box office but who among us would call Craig the best Bond?

I have a theory that the Bond nearest and dearest to your heart is the first 007 you saw projected on the big screen.

Popular consensus tells us that Sean Connery, who played the role in six films spanning 1962 To 1971 and then once again in 1983's non-officially sanctioned Never Say Never Again, is the best Bond. As cool as Connery was he isn't my top of the pops. Dr. No, the first 007 movie, came out before I was born and Connery more or less permanently parked his Aston Martin around the time I entered grade two.

The Bond that made the biggest impression on me was Roger Moore. I know critically speaking he wasn't the most beloved Bond. Pauline Kael once wrote about him, "Roger Moore is dutiful and passive as Bond; his clothes are neatly pressed and he shows up for work, like an office manager who is turning into dead wood but hanging on to collect his pension."

I also know that hardcore spy fans considered Moore too well-mannered and pleasant to be effective, but he was my first, and I guess the first cut is the deepest because I still have a fondness for his breezy take on the super agent.

But that's just me.

To get a broader picture I did a highly scientific Double-Blind Bond Peer Reviewed In House Clinical Trial (in other words I asked my Facebook and Twitter friends) to determine the world's favourite 007 portrayer.

The contenders were Connery, George Lazenby, Moore, Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan and Craig — everyone who has played Bond in one of the 24 officially sanctioned 007 movies.

Several contributors brought up others like Barry Nelson, who played James Bond in a 1954 television adaptation of Casino Royale. Also mentioned were David Niven's turn as Bond in 1967's Casino Royale and another actor who has never played 007. "Clive Owen," suggested one poster, "once they get around to casting him in the next one."

After eliminating the unofficial 007s and non-Bonds a team of experts (OK, it was just me reading through the posts as Live and Let Die played on the TV behind me) sifted through the results.

Pollsters said Brosnan Is Not Enough to '90s Bond Pierce Brosnan who came in dead last with just 1.9 per cent of the vote.

"I liked Pierce Brosnan because he embodied all the others combined," wrote one positive poster. "Charm, humour, ruthlessness, cunning."

Timothy Dalton earned 3.9 per cent with one respondent saying, "If there really was an agent who was an assassin with a licence to kill ... it would be him."

At 9.8 per cent, George Lazenby fared better than Brosnan and Dalton even though he only made one 007 film.

My favourite Bond came in third with 15.6 per cent, just behind Daniel Craig's 21.5 per cent. "Craig gets me wanting to watch whereas the others are placeholders," wrote a Facebook friend, "Sorry."

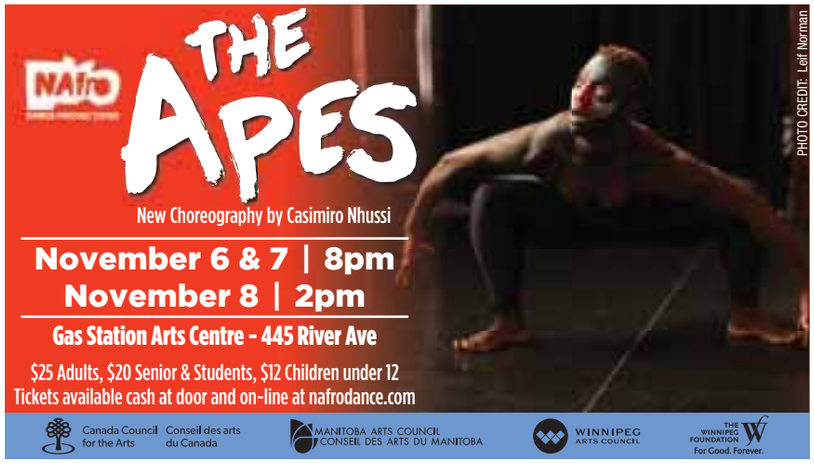
By far and away, Sean Connery was the winner with a whopping 39.2 per cent of the vote. This comment seems to sum up the reason why people like him. "Sean Connery because Sean Connery!"

Who is your favourite Bond? Chime in at @metropicks.

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

Spectre ★★★★
The Peanuts Movie ★★★
Miss You Already ★★★

HOW RATING WORKS	
★★★★	SEE IT
★★★	WORTHWHILE
★★	UP TO YOU
★	SKIP IT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The off-screen Spectre drama

SPECTRE

If you don't like problems, don't become a film producer

The behind-the-scenes drama on the Spectre set included the secretive script being leaked in the Sony hack. HANDOUT

Before James Bond could even get himself into his first pickle, a shadowy international threat loomed.

About a week into shooting Spectre, James Bond producers Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson got some bad news.

Not only had a draft of the highly secretive script been leaked in the infamous Sony hack, but it came along with a slew of private communications about the film, highlighting its third act problems, multiple rewrites, ballooning budget and one very significant spoiler.

Broccoli and Wilson didn't find this out from the Internet or even Sony — the distributor and co-financier on Spectre.

They read about it in a newspaper. With phone lines and email servers down, they couldn't even get in touch with their partners in the immediate aftermath.

"It was a bit tricky for us," Broccoli acknowledged.

But beyond making sure the copyrighted script was taken offline, she said they essentially just proceeded with making the film.

"You know what they say, you shouldn't see how a sausage is made," Wilson said in a recent phone interview from Mexico City.

He and his step-sister Broccoli were in the capital to attend a premiere of Spectre, the 24th in the 53-year-old film series, which bows in North America this Friday.

The purported drama that the hacked emails exposed is no more or less than they've experienced on any other film in the franchise, noted Broccoli in the phone interview.

"They're challenging films to make because of the size of what we do," she said. "I always say, if you don't like problems, don't become a film producer."

Spectre certainly doesn't skimp on size. The film, which finds the martini-swilling spy on a multi-continent quest, opens with a complicated tracking shot in the streets of Mexico City for the Day of the Dead parade, featuring over 1,500 extras dressed and painted to perfection.

It required 1,500 unique costumes, 75 costumers, five months of preparation, two helicopters and police escorts for the buses used to transport the extras.

And that's only one of the film's exotic set pieces. There's also the 400 tons of man-made snow that they had to use in Austria, the 18 nights they spent shooting a car chase in Rome, and the sand storms and 113-degree temperatures they found in Erfoud, Morocco.

The film's budget is reported to be near $250 million.

But Bond is big business and the series has been on an upswing.

The last film, Skyfall, was produced for a reported $150-$200 million and became the highest grossing Bond film ever with over $1.1 billion in ticket sales worldwide.

Spectre sees the return of Skyfall director Sam Mendes and star Daniel Craig in his fourth film as 007.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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SIR WILLIAM STEPHENSON

The real-life spy who inspired Ian Fleming's James Bond

One of the world's greatest spies was an operative for England with an affinity for martinis, a suave rapport with elite power players, and an uncanny ability to infiltrate and eliminate threats.

This isn't the fictional James Bond we're talking about, but the real-life Sir William Stephenson — a quiet Canadian code-named Intrepid who many believe inspired author Ian Fleming to create his over-the-top British spy hero.

"Without doubt, Fleming's idea of James Bond is based on Sir William," says Cord Hart, a former CIA operative and U.S. Army colonel who got to know Stephenson through intelligence circles in the early '80s.

With the latest instalment in the bombastic 007 franchise, Spectre, hitting theatres Friday, descendants and admirers of the late Winnipeg-born war hero say Stephenson's impressive exploits are too little known.

"I always tell people he's the most famous Winnipegger of all time," says Heartland Travel and Tours owner Don Finkbeiner, whose tours include a stop at a bronze life-size statue of Stephenson near the Manitoba legislature.

"Nobody even comes close. And I would suggest he's the most famous Canadian of all time."

Sir William Stephenson. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Of course, the fact that many of Stephenson's activities were clandestine makes for murky claims to the Bond title. Not to mention the fact Fleming has said he based the character on several people he met throughout the course of his wartime naval career. But advocates seize on Fleming's oft-cited comment that Bond was "a highly romanticized version of a true spy. The real thing, the man who became one of the great agents of the (Second World War) is William Stephenson."

Stephenson's third cousin, Gary Solar, is convinced that Fleming drew inspiration from the man, who rose from humble working-class roots to a wide variety of achievements: lightweight boxing champion, First World War flying ace, millionaire inventor and entrepreneur, adviser to former U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt, confidante to former British prime minister Winston Churchill, and chief of an elaborate British spy operation based in New York.

Finkbeiner says it all started in 1897, when Stephenson was born in the hard-scrabble neighbourhood of Point Douglas.

When the First World War broke out, Stephenson joined the Canadian Army and earned commendations for his prowess as a fighter pilot.

After the war, he married a U.S. tobacco heiress and became a millionaire himself by developing a method of transmitting photos by radiowaves. He grew his fortune even more as he worked his way into a variety of other industries, including automotive manufacturing, aviation, construction, the hotel business and the movie business.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CeeLo Green says he has grown personally and professionally and wants to return to The Voice. CASEY CURRY/INVISION/AP

The king of comebacks

NEW ALBUM

Heart Blanche is a 'prequel' to his collection of new music

CeeLo Green says Heart Blanche, his first studio album of new music in five years, is only the beginning of what he has planned.

Green is returning to the spotlight after a professional hiatus that began last year with his departure from NBC's The Voice following a felony drug charge.

The past few years have been a time of introspection and creativity, Green says, and Heart Blanche is among the results.

"This album is a prequel to the rest of the music I want to release in the very near future," Green said in a recent interview. "(It's) the start of a new beginning."

The 40-year-old entertainer, who recently revealed his year-old engagement and desire to return to The Voice, talked about his new album, to be released Friday.

Is Heart Blanche your most personal album yet?
It's always personal to some degree, but much more introspective this time around — more introspective than I've been able to be, had the opportunity of being, the pleasure of being, over the last five years professionally. The last time I did it to this degree was under the alias Gnarls Barkley.

What was your process making this album?
I've been recording this album for about three years. I did some recording in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Atlanta, the Bahamas, Palm Springs, California.

I've been all over the world recording this record. I'm proud to say that I was very proficient and prolific and I got an awful lot of work done. I have amassed a large amount of material, and I'll be able to use it in increments.

Did you always know you would be a musician?
I would say so. Elton John, for example. Or Earth, Wind & Fire, or KISS and Sly Stone — these people who were — like David Bowie — these people who were iconic images (and) fashionistas, I'm cut from their cloth.

I'm encouraged from their era of entertainment. I do feel like I represent that for a new generation.

Does the little kid in you freak out now that these artists are essentially your peers?
It makes sense to me and I'm cool around these people. I get a chance to be with Prince and I'm cool around him. Because I feel like I know him. I feel like I grew up with him. They feel like extended family, like uncles and aunts.

How creatively satisfying has this new album been?
I'm content with the album but I'm not complacent with the album. I can do more and I want to do more. I want to first be reintroduced, and I want the people to be reminded of who I am in an artistic capacity.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STAR COUPLE

Gwen and Blake an item

Recently divorced singer Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani, who filed for divorce in August, are dating.

A representative for Shelton confirmed earlier this week that the two stars are a couple. Both Shelton and Stefani are mentors on NBC's The Voice.

Stefani filed for divorce from fellow musician Gavin Rossdale in August after nearly 13 years of marriage, citing irreconcilable differences. Both are seeking joint custody of their three children.

Shelton and singer Miranda Lambert announced that they were divorced after four years of marriage in July.

Both Shelton and Lambert attended Wednesday night's Country Music Association Awards in Nashville, Tennessee. "I needed a bright spot this year," Lambert said onstage when she won female vocalist of the year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toni Collette and Drew Barrymore star in Catherine Hardwicke's Miss You Already, a 'life-affirming' movie about friendship, love and a cancer diagnosis

Drew Barrymore and Toni Collette are two inseparable girlfriends in Miss You Already. CONTRIBUTED

Drew all grown up

Drew Barrymore gets excited about ideas, work, memories and friends, drops an occasional F-bomb, adores her kids, "these baby girls who are everything in my universe" and wishes "every billboard in the world" carried the message that life begins at 40.

In September, the morning after Catherine Hardwicke's dramedy Miss You Already had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, Barrymore praised Miss You Already co-star Toni Collette, who plays self-absorbed wild child Milly to Barrymore's rock-steady Jess, two longtime girlfriends dealing with motherhood, relationships and unexpected tragedy.

Miss You Already opens in theatres today.

"I feel like I've been like Milly in my life at some points, but I'm much more like Jess now in my life," says Barrymore. Her often-tumultuous childhood led to rebellious teenage and young adult years. It's all out there; her 1990 autobiography Little Girl Lost, details everything.

"(Miss You Already is) such a love story for women and all being done by women.
Drew Barrymore

"Little Girl Lost is a let-me-try-to-put-my-life-back-together written by, honestly, another man (Todd Gold). He did the typing, I did the talking," says Barrymore.

She's written her own story now, a series of essays and reflections on various stages of her life called Wildflower. An early version of the book peeks out from her tote bag, the pages dog-eared from proofreading.

"I think you will be very surprised," Barrymore says of Wildflower. "It's a shuffled deck. It goes from (age) 5 to 35 to 7 to 18."

Making a film that was "such a love story for women and all being done by women, I got really drawn into what that would be," Barrymore said. "And maybe my girls when they're older can watch this and the whole womanly aspect of it, (which) felt really safe and appropriate for where I was at that moment in my life."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toni gets teary eyed

Miss You Already aims to bob along at a buoyant, lively pace even while staring intently at the reality of a cancer diagnosis.

Toni Collette's Milly flashes bartenders and commandeers cabs for impromptu roadtrips, while also dealing frankly with hair loss, life-altering surgery and sudden bouts of nausea.

Director Catherine Hardwicke recalled when her father had cancer he still made "wicked jokes, even at the last minute." She and Collette talked to cancer survivors to ensure they were getting other details right, and they were validated by the response of those who have seen the film.

Still, the movie is definitely a three-hankie weeper. Even Collette can't help crying when talking about her character, Milly, the former wild-child mother of two whose world shatters when she's diagnosed with breast cancer.

It's a film about friendship and love — all you have to do is be human to relate.
Toni Collette

"Every time — I'm going to start crying thinking about it, sorry — every time we got to the scene where Milly has to tell her daughter goodbye, I just couldn't (do) it," said Collette, mom of a son and daughter, wiping away tears. "It still gets to me. It must be one of the hardest things you'd have to do if you were facing your own mortality."

It's also a story about enduring female friendship. Milly's lifelong sidekick Jess (Drew Barrymore) is her rock, but even their bond is tested by Milly's illness and changes in Jess's life. When Collette hears people are compelled to call their best friend as soon as they came out of the theatre, "Drew and I are like, high five, we've done our job."

Australian Collette, 43, first captivated moviegoers as marriage-minded, ABBA-loving Muriel Heslop in Muriel's Wedding in 1994. She was nominated for an Oscar for The Sixth Sense and went on to star in About a Boy, Little Miss Sunshine and The Way Way Back.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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THE TV DINNER JESSICA ALLEN

"Friends can throw down with each other in the most amazing way, and recover in a different way than lovers."

I was part of a chain of swollen-eyed, wet-sleeved viewers who exited the theatre after a September screening of Miss You Already, a film about two best friends who cope with infertility, infidelity and a cancer diagnosis. Part of me felt angry, like I'd just been emotionally manipulated. And, having seen movies like Love Story, Terms of Endearment, Steel Magnolias and Beaches, I should have known better. The other part just wanted to run up to the closest stranger and say, "Hold me!"

But don't go see Miss You Already, which opens on Friday, just because you need a good cry. See it because Toni Colette, as the wild free spirit, Milly, and Drew Barrymore, as the more firmly anchored Jess, deliver exceptional performances of their flawed, complicated characters. See it because there's been plenty of talk about gender inequality in Hollywood but here's a movie starring two women, directed by a woman, written by a woman, about women.

"A very long female friendship is as profound as a relationship with your children and your spouse," Barrymore recently told the New York Times, "and yet it's really given third credit. Friends can throw down with each other in the most amazing way, and recover in a different way than lovers."

Truth. If Simon told me that I had two weeks to lose four pounds in order to get to an arbitrary weight that I chose back in January, I'd murder him. But my friend, a female, did. And I appreciate it.

THE MOVIE: Miss You Already

THE MEAL: Roasted sea bream

We made a pact some 10 months ago to lose the 15 pounds we'd gained at our new jobs. We take turns making healthy lunches. We record our calorie intakes. We send encouraging texts. She reached her goal months ago. But I still have those four pounds. (Believe me: I could stand to lose more, but being thin would be off-brand for me.) It's crunch time and she's had to resort to tough love, like suggesting I cut out at least 200 calories a day by not drinking wine with dinner.

That's the stupidest (most-reasonable) thing I've ever heard. Wine isn't my problem. Neither is breakfast (oatmeal) or lunch (salad.) It's dinner, mostly because I eat two of them.

While I was working on my miss-you-already-pizza-and-pasta-meal-plan for the week ahead, I leafed through The French Women Don't Get Fat Cookbook, written by Mireille Guiliano. I decided to make her recipe for roasted sea bream with vegetables.

It's simplicity sounded too good to be true: toss chopped onion, potato, yellow pepper and tomato in olive oil, salt and pepper, and bake. Add the fish on top with some lemon and bake a little longer. Serve with fresh cilantro sprinkled on top. It was both delicious and satisfying.

Like clockwork, we got up after finishing our first plate to refill in the kitchen. That's when it occurred to me: the recipe was for four people, not two.

French women don't get fat because they don't have a second dinner.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

TV PREMIERE

Khloe to chat with kin and confidantes over Kocktails

Khloe Kardashian's new talk show has a premiere date. The FYI channel says Kocktails With Khloe will start Jan. 20. It will be the gathering place for celebrity friends and family, who will join her on a set that replicates a home environment, complete with dining area and a functional kitchen. There will be eight weekly episodes, FYI said Thursday.

She's been part of her family's TV empire in shows including Keeping Up With the Kardashians and Khloe and Lamar, which featured NBA star Lamar Odom, her husband from whom she later filed for divorce.

She recently halted divorce proceedings as Odom recovers from an apparent overdose of cocaine and other drugs at a Nevada brothel, where last month he was found unconscious. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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4 ADAPTATIONS AS TRUE TO THEIR ORIGINS AS THE PEANUTS MOVIE

Not every adaptation of a show stays faithful. With The Peanuts Movie hitting theatres — and in a beautifully exact (if high-def) simulacrum of the strip's storied TV specials, complete with actual kids doing the voices — here's a look at other movies that got it right **MATT PRIGGE/METRO NEW YORK**

ALL PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

1 And Now for Something Completely Different (1971)

Source: Monty Python's Flying Circus

As a troupe and individually, Monty Python made several landmark films that kept the spirit of their experimental sketch show without actually being them. But their first movie was exactly like the show. In fact it was simply a best-of sketch cavalcade, with greatest hits (the parrot sketch, The Lumberjack Song, Upper-Class Twit of the Year, etc.) re-shot, and with no laugh-track. The reason? They wanted to invade America and no one had heard of them. Monty Python and the Holy Grail would take care of that better than their cinematic debut, but it's still a fine entry-point for newbs.

2 The Naked Gun' (1988)

Source: Police Squad!

Doing a film of Police Squad! made sense: The show, which ran for only six episodes in 1982, found David and Jerry Zucker plus Jim Abraham (a.k.a. ZAZ) trying to do for TV what they had done with Airplane! on film. In fact, it was the quick jokes and never-ceasing sight gags that got it yanked from the air; as one exec infamously said, it didn't work because it required viewers actually pay attention. So back to film they went, keeping pretty much everything but adding big (or, well, biggish) names like George Kennedy, Priscilla Presley, Ricardo Montalban and O.J. Simpson, who spends the film either physically abused or hospitalized.

3 South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut (1999)

Source: South Park

There's tons of swearing, a couple of big-name cameo voices, a barrage of musical numbers and even a couple effects that are more than two guys working with construction paper. But the South Park movie, which hit theatres in the midst of the show's third season, is basically the same thing, only better than usual. Indeed, if it did anything it established that the show was no fluke, and that creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone had a true, unique angle on America, repression, hypocrisy and anything else they saw fit to satirize. After this the show would be even more giddy about tackling hot button topics, to all of society's betterment.

4 Jackass: The Movie (2002), Jackass 2 (2006), Jackass 3-D (2010)

Source: Jackass

Like the South Park movie, the inevitable Jackass movies were bigger and raunchier but essentially the same thing. In this case, the films are mere conveyor belts of gross-out stunts and body trauma, exploring what the physique can take or how far the squad members will go in the pursuit of their, um, craft. Not that they were simply TV on movie screens: by the third we get dildos flying out of the screen in beautiful 3D — surely one of the more original uses of a technology too often used for the truly crass and lowest common denominator.

Boyden takes residential school film on the road

CANADIAN ART

Giller winner teams up with filmmaker for Project Charlie

When the frozen body of 12-year-old Charlie Wenjack was found on a lonely stretch of railway tracks in northern Ontario nearly 50 years ago, it sparked the first inquest into the treatment of aboriginal children in Canadian residential schools.

Before the boy's death, many Canadians weren't aware of the country's residential school system, acclaimed novelist Joseph Boyden explains. It would be some 30 years before the last one closed its doors.

"Charlie put that into motion," said the Scotiabank Giller Prize winner. "He's a living and breathing symbol."

Boyden is collaborating with filmmaker Terril Calder on Project Charlie. The animated film will tour across the country next year in conjunction with Boyden's forthcoming novel Seven Matches, and will mark the 50th anniversary of Wenjack's death.

"We are using his story as a call to action," said Calder. "Considering all that has come to light and the (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada) report, it is timely to come at this story with a contemporary perspective that pulls no punches. It examines not only Charlie's (life), but speaks to our nation's role in evoking change. Not acting is an action against reconciliation."

Justice Murray Sinclair led the commission on the Indian Residential School system in Canada, and his report — released in the spring — resulted in 94 recommendations aimed at bridging the experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Project Charlie secured its funding through the inaugural (Re)conciliation initiative, and is one of six cultural works by aboriginal artists that will begin to roll out across the country in the fall of 2016.

Selected from 190 submissions by a panel of indigenous arts professionals, the six pilot projects are receiving up to $75,000 of federal funding through the Canada Council for the Arts and its partners — J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. The initiative aims to promote themes of conciliation and reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Art and reconciliation are not new concepts, says Elder Samuel Thomas, a grant recipient based in Niagara Falls, Ont.

"This is something that's been on our minds as aboriginal people for a long time," he said.

"We are using his story as a call to action."
Filmmaker Terril Calder

In 1979, Thomas began to resurrect 18th and 19th century Iroquois beading styles, collaborating with his mother for 37 years before her recent death, and facilitating beading workshops between aboriginals and non-aboriginals.

Over the past 12 years, he has also worked internationally with Kenyan communities, using art and beading as a means for reconciliation between both tribal and religious clashes.

The long-standing tradition of using beads in a way that "helps put your mind in proper perspective in order to heal and move forward" is something that Thomas is now expanding to the broader community through his (Re)conciliation initiative.

With Opening the Doors to Dialogue, he will host beading sessions across the country.

"The beads are used to take the lump out of your throat to speak again, unplug your ears to hear again, to wipe your tears to see again," said Thomas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Author Joseph Boyden is collaborating with filmmaker Terril Calder on Project Charlie, an animated film about Charlie Wenjack, whose frozen body was found on a stretch of railway tracks in northern Ontario nearly 50 years ago. HANDOUT

Now playing

ACTION & ADVENTURE

Spectre

Director: Sam Mendes
Starring: Daniel Craig, Christoph Waltz

A cryptic message from Bond's past sends him on a trail to uncover a sinister organisation. While M battles political forces to keep the secret service alive, Bond peels back the layers of deceit to reveal the terrible truth behind Spectre.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 66% Audience: 99%

DRAMA

Miss You Already

Director: Catherine Hardwicke
Starring: Toni Collette, Drew Barrymore

An powerful story following two best friends, Milly and Jess, as they navigate life's highs and lows. Inseparable since they were young girls, they can't remember a time they didn't share everything.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 71% Audience: 91%

ANIMATION/KIDS

The Peanuts Movie

Director: Steve Martino
Starring: Noah Schnapp, Hadley Belle Miller

Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus and the rest of the beloved Peanuts gang make their big-screen debut, like they've never been seen before, in state of the art 3D animation.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: 85% Audience: 97%

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Trump Toronto named No. 1 hotel in Canada by Condé Nast Traveler readers

A golf getaway with star power

MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIF.

Carmel area renowned for beauty, Hollywood ties

Brian Kendall
For Metro Canada

Even now, almost 30 years after his wildly publicized reign as the town's mayor, Clint Eastwood remains a towering figure in Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Tourists fantasize about bumping into him at his restaurant at Mission Ranch, the Hollywood icon's nine-hectare property just outside of town, and look for him as they explore the tony streets and hidden courtyards of this unendingly charming coastal community on California's Monterey Peninsula.

But these days Eastwood is more likely to be found teeing it up at nearby Pebble Beach Golf Links, the fabled course he co-owns with Arnold Palmer and former Major League Baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth.

One of the finest, most dramatic courses anywhere, Pebble Beach is the undisputed golf headliner of a famously seductive peninsula two hours south of San Francisco that includes the communities of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Pacific Grove, Seaside and Pebble Beach.

Pebble Beach golf course in Monterey, Calif., offers dramatic views from its emerald fairways. ISTOCK

Pebble Beach, a bucket-list course for every golfer, charges a green fee of $495, one of the most expensive in the game. But the good news is that golfers don't have to break the bank to enjoy memorable golf on the Monterey Peninsula.

Pebble Beach's sister courses, Spyglass Hill Golf Course and the Links at Spanish Bay, both offer spectacular ocean views at more palatable prices.

Another local beauty is Del Monte Golf Course, opened in 1897 and the oldest course in continuous operation west of the Mississippi. Two recently renovated layouts, Poppy Hills Golf Club and Quail Lodge Golf Course, are also highly regarded designs.

And a special favourite of knowledgeable golfers is Pacific Grove Golf Links, an affordable oceanfront beauty known as the "other Pebble."

Between rounds, head back to Carmel to explore a coastal town jam-packed with upscale restaurants, hidden courtyards, quirky passageways, au courant art galleries and elegantly cosy inns.

Main Street in Carmel-by-the-Sea. ISTOCK

One of the most popular places to stay is Cypress Inn, co-owned by another Hollywood legend and local resident, Doris Day. The hit recordings of the now 91-year-old Day are piped into the 44 sunny rooms of the 1929 local landmark.

Carmel's small downtown is an architectural mishmash of English-style country houses, Swiss chalets and, most notably, the 21 whimsical fairy tale cottages built by local architect Hugh Comstock starting in the 1920s. Eastwood, who was elected for a two-year term in 1986 on a pro-progress platform, dismissed these Comstock Cottages as "Smurf homes."

Once a bohemian refuge for artists such as writer Jack London and photographers Ansel Adams and Edward Weston, Carmel now numbers among the most exclusive addresses in California. Real estate prices soar ever higher on the approach to Carmel Bay, where the sea ebbs and crashes against a long white-sand beach.

Glimpsed at cliff-top across the bay are the emerald fairways of famed Pebble Beach, for golfers the most alluring of all the wonders on the Monterey Peninsula.

For more golf destinations, visit Brian's website at canadiangolftraveller.com

ON THE MOVE

Sun holiday tips: All-inclusive resort evolves, Cuba beckons

Willemstad, Curaçao. ISTOCK

Loren Christie
For Metro Canada

Attention sun seekers: There are a few things you need to bear in mind as you plan your winter vacation.

It's not going to be a great year for cheap and cheerful deals. Most tour operators do their contracting in U.S. dollars so the unfavourable exchange rate means sun holidays will be harder on the wallet. Additionally, it's shaping up to be a strong El Niño winter, which means cooler temperatures in closer (and typically cheaper) destinations like Florida, Bahamas, Cuba and parts of Mexico. Although it is impossible to fully predict the weather, those craving heat are advised to drop a few extra dollars and go a little farther south.

According to the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the Dutch island of Curaçao, located just 60 kilometres north of Venezuela, is the fastest-growing Caribbean destination for Canadians. Transat begins its inaugural flights to the island in December.

Resorts go upscale

The all-inclusive resort continues to evolve, going more upscale with better food, decor and service. Karisma Hotels, for example, are branding themselves as gourmet-inclusive versus all-inclusive because of their all à-la-carte dining — no buffets and no reservations required.

Hyatt has broken into the all-inclusive market with upscale resorts such as the Hyatt Ziva and Hyatt Zilara, and mega resorts such as Casa de Campo in Dominican Republic continue to grow in popularity.

Spanning 7,000 tropical acres, Casa de Campo is home to three golf courses, a 370-slip Marina and Yacht Club, a polo club and Altos de Chavón, an artisan's village modelled after a 16th-century Mediterranean city with boutiques, museums and a 5,000-seat Grecian-style amphitheatre.

Hot spots

Destinations in Central America such as Roatán, Honduras, are growing in popularity. Panama has opened a new airport in Río Hato, drastically cutting the transfer time to many of that country's most popular resorts.

Tourism to Cuba is up almost 25 per cent as Canadians race to see it before the country opens up to the wider U.S. market. A great option for travellers is Cuba Cruise.

Introduced just two years ago, this small ship offers a seven-night itinerary that circumnavigates the island, stopping at the less-travelled ports of Cienfuegos, Santiago de Cuba and exotic Maria la Gorda. It also includes an overnight stay in the lively capital of Havana and the chance to snorkel above colourful coral reefs.

TRIPADVISOR RANKING

Jakarta tops list of most affordable destinations in Asia

Jakarta, Indonesia has emerged as the most affordable travel destination in Asia for U.S. travellers this winter, according to the number crunchers at TripAdvisor.

In fact, for Americans who've long had Asia on their minds, there's perhaps no better time to book a trip than this winter, as the average price of a one-week trip to the Far East has dropped 12 per cent compared to the same period last year.

Moreover, most of the destinations that cracked the top 10 list are located in Southeast Asia, where temperatures are still mild and the sun high.

For travellers on a budget, the Indonesian capital is a good bet, having recorded the biggest drop at 32 per cent.

The total price tag for a seven-night trip to Jakarta — including flight and hotel — clocks in at $1,343, the lowest rate of 20 cities covered in the index.

That compares to Hong Kong, the priciest destination on the list, with a one-week trip costing $2,590, mostly due to a six per cent spike in airfare recorded this season.

"Asia consistently provides outstanding accommodation value and this year U.S. travellers can also take advantage of significantly lower airfares, so winter is a great time for Americans to explore the Far East, with both the weather and prices more moderate," said TripAdvisor spokesperson Brooke Ferencsik.

Overall, Thailand and Vietnam are the most budget-friendly countries in Asia: Thailand landed three spots on the top 10 list, while Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, both in Vietnam, took the second and third spots.

For the ranking, analysts looked at the average price of a one-week trip to 20 popular Asian cities between Nov. 1, 2015, and April 30, 2016. AFP

The average price of a one-week trip Jakarta, Indonesia, has dropped 32 per cent compared to last year. ISTOCK

CHEAP THRILLS

The Top 10 most affordable destinations in Asia this winter, according to TripAdvisor:

1. Jakarta, Indonesia, $1,343 USD
2. Hanoi, Vietnam, $1,366
3. Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, $1,434
4. Chiang Mai, Thailand, $1,577
5. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, $1,589
6. Shanghai, China, $1,665
7. Bangkok, Thailand, $1,680
8. New Delhi, $1,877
9. Siem Reap, Cambodia, $1,895
10. Kathu, Thailand, $1,902

Finding the pure life in Costa Rica

NATURE BREAK

Go from a turtle's nest on the beach to a sky-high zip line

Kathy Buckworth
For Metro Canada

The shores of the Tortuguero River are home to various wildlife. PHOTOS BY KATHY BUCKWORTH/FOR METRO

A fitting philosophy for a land that is 46 per cent forested.

"Pura Vida" said our guide, as we arrived in San José, Costa Rica, which, literally translated, means "pure life." This describes the mandate of this eco-conscious country and the joy its inhabitants take in living in a land that is 46 per cent forested; it is generally used as an answer to "How are you?" or just as a hello.

They say hello, or good morning, early in Costa Rica. Year round, the sun rises around 5:30 and sets around 5:30. When the sun is up, there is a huge diversity of outdoor, natural and wildlife adventures to experience in this relatively small country. We had said goodbye to our cubicle office plants and hello to the pure life that awaited.

Tortuguero, on the Caribbean coast, is a small village of 1,000 inhabitants, accessible only by boat or airplane and is known for the turtle hatchings that happen on the beach in the dark of night. Hundreds of turtle nests produce thousands of eggs (of which 0.1 per cent survive to adulthood), every May to November.

Spotters from the National Park find where the nest has been dug, and quietly, without light, allow visitors to witness a turtle laying approximately 110 eggs. The turtles start laying eggs at around the age of 25, and do so until they are 150, coming back to the same spot, every two to three years.

But that's not all the wildlife; the shores of the Tortuguero River leading in and out of the village are dotted with crocodiles, caimans, sloths, blue herons, macaws, toucans, and many other bird species. With some trepidation, we slid into our kayaks to paddle the river, but found our voyage strangely serene, barring the prehistoric cries from the surprisingly tiny howler monkeys that populate the area.

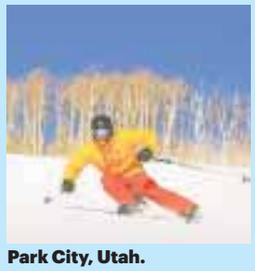
Across the country to La Fortuna, we found one of the most popular tourist spots in Costa Rica, with a huge variety of outdoor activities to choose from. From careening down Costa Rica's highest zip line at Sky Adventures — half a mile, at more than 60 miles per hour — to the hot springs, water parks, horseback riding, and many hiking trails available. The village is shadowed by the Arenal Volcano, which has been dormant since 2010. It's hard to remember the water cooler gossip when you're soaking in the natural hot springs — the perfect way to purify both body and brain at the end of a wild (life) and wonderful day.

For more information visit savethecanadians.org. #PuraVida

The writer was a guest of the Costa Rica Tourism Board, which did not review nor approve the story.

TRAVEL NOTES SKI MERGER, TRAVEL LOGS AND JAPAN JUNKET

Bigger ski country
Park City Mountain Resort and Canyons Resort in Utah have merged under the new ownership of Vail Resorts to form Park City, now the largest ski and snowboard resort in the U.S. After a $50-million reno and a new high-speed, two-way gondola that links the two areas, Park City now offers 7,300+ acres of skiing on 300+ trails, with 41 lifts. Visit ParkCity.com.



Park City, Utah. CONTRIBUTED

Travel field journal
New book Do Big Small Things inspires readers to connect with the transformative power of travel. Written by travel company G Adventures founder Bruce Poon Tip, it functions as a type of visual workbook, where you are encouraged to record the essence of your trips, however far-flung or close to home, and share the creativity online. $30 (Collins), DoBigSmallThings.com.

Draw inspiration from your travels. CONTRIBUTED

Bucket list: Osaka
Tokyo's sexier cousin Osaka is so worth building into your Japan plan. The nightlife, the amazing food, the shopping, the history — this tiny city of only 19 million practically vibrates. From the Osaka Castle with its huge moat to the Shinto Sumiyoshi-taisha Shrine, you won't lack for ancient culture to soak up. Plan for spring to hit apple blossom time. Visit osaka-info.jp. DOUG WALLACE

Dōtonbori has an endless selection of eats. CONTRIBUTED

metro SPORTS

Mets pitcher Matt Harvey was named the NL Comeback Player of the Year and Rangers DH Prince Fielder earned the AL honour

JETS VS. SENATORS CLOSE-IN ACTION Ottawa's Mika Zibanejad attempts to control a flying puck as Jets goaltender Michael Hutchinson looks on in Ottawa Thursday. For game details and final score, visit metronews.ca.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/FRED CHARTRAND

Kane's ordeal over, county drops case

LAW

Evidentiary details 'tend to contradict' accuser's claim

Chicago Blackhawks forward Patrick Kane can focus solely on his NHL career after avoiding criminal charges in a rape investigation, with prosecutors ending a bizarre three-month ordeal that put one of hockey's biggest stars at the centre of intense speculation and criticism.

Prosecutors announced Thursday they declined to file charges against Kane because of a lack of credible evidence in a case "rife with reasonable doubt." The accuser signed an affidavit saying she did not want to press charges, prosecutors said.

Roland Cercone, a lawyer for the 21-year-old woman who made the accusation, did not return messages seeking comment from The Associated Press. A person who answered the accuser's mother's cellphone hung up Thursday when contacted by The AP.

Erie County District Attorney Frank Sedita said a three-month investigation found that physical and forensic evidence "tend to contradict" the accuser's claim that she was raped on Aug. 2 at Kane's off-season home outside Buffalo.

Patrick Kane

BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

"The DNA results lend no corroboration whatsoever to the complainant's claim," said Sedita, who decided against presenting the case to a grand jury for possible charges.

"I have repeatedly said that I did nothing wrong," Kane said in a statement issued by the Blackhawks. "I have respected the legal process and I am glad that this matter has now been closed and I will have nothing further to say going forward."

It's not immediately clear whether Kane could face disciplinary action from the National Hockey League. Deputy commissioner Bill Daly said the league wouldn't comment until reviewing the prosecutor's findings.

At 26, Kane is one of the NHL's top young stars and has won three Stanley Cup championships in Chicago over the past six years, including last season.

He had been in trouble before, too, arrested after an altercation with a cab driver in Buffalo in the summer of 2009. Photos of him partying are easily found online.

But the assault case brought by a woman he had met at a nightclub was by far the most serious allegation Kane had faced.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"I have respected the legal process and I am glad that this matter has now been closed and I will have nothing further to say.
Patrick Kane

OHL

Junior Tkachuk's a chip off the old Jet

As an NHL player, Dale Hunter saw first-hand the skills that made Keith Tkachuk an elite power forward with the Winnipeg Jets.

Now coaching the Ontario Hockey League's London Knights, Hunter sees the same toughness and scoring prowess in Tkachuk's 17-year-old son.

Matthew Tkachuk, a six-foot-one, 195-pound forward, joined the Knights for his draft season and is shaping up an intimidating power forward much like his father.

"You see (Keith's) stature, he could score goals, played hard and again, a lot like Matthew," Hunter said.

"He finds good areas to score and he plays hard, and he's hard to play against. (Keith) was very hard to play against, he's a lot like his son, they're sort of a spitting image."

Keith Tkachuk was one of the best power forwards of his era. He made his debut with the Jets in 1991-92 and finished his career with 538 goals and 527 assists in 1,201 games with Winnipeg/Arizona, St. Louis and Atlanta.

He was an all-star five times and reached the 50-goal plateau twice. Internationally, he represented the United States at four Olympic Games and helped the Americans win the 1996 World Cup.

Matthew Tkachuk

AARON BELL/OHL IMAGES

"He finds good areas to score and he plays hard.
Coach Dale Hunter

"He's a huge influence. I mean I look to him whenever there's a problem, whenever there's something good … I tell him everything," said Matthew Tkachuk at the All-American Prospects Game in Buffalo, N.Y., in September. "He's been there every step of the way for me so far and he'll continue to be."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WORLD CUP OF HOCKEY

Babcock top coach, Quenneville assists

Mike Babcock and Joel Quenneville will be working together on Canada's World Cup of Hockey team. Babcock is back as the head coach after winning back-to-back Olympic gold, but not without the management group giving strong consideration to hiring Quenneville in that role.

"It was a two-horse race for me," Canadian general manager Doug Armstrong said Thursday. "I wasn't torn on the final decision, but I thought we had to give Joel Quenneville the opportunity for us to discuss him. You just can't get past three Stanley Cups in six years. What excites me is having both guys on the staff."

Babcock has never lost with Canada in international competition, winning gold at the 1997 world junior championships, 2004 world championships and then the 2010 and 2014 Olympics. Hockey Canada president and CEO Tom Renney called Babcock's international excellence the "tipping point."

The current Toronto Maple Leafs coach also won the Stanley Cup with the Detroit Red Wings in 2008.

Mike Babcock

THE CANADIAN PRESS

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFL AWARDS

Bombers' triple nominee

Jeff Knox Jr., and Jamaal Westerman have made quite an impact in their CFL debuts.

The Saskatchewan Roughriders linebacker and Winnipeg Blue Bombers defensive lineman both received three nominations in balloting for the CFL's individual awards Thursday.

The six-foot-three, 249-pound Westerman has 15 sacks in his first season with Winnipeg. Prior to that, the New York native, who grew up in Brampton, Ont., appeared in 58 career NFL games with six different teams.

Quarterback Henry Burris was a unanimous selection as the Ottawa Redblacks outstanding player nominee while '14 Grey Cup MVP Bo Levi Mitchell got the nod for the Calgary Stampeders and injured quarterback Zach Collaros was voted the Hamilton Tiger-Cats outstanding player.

The other top player award nominees were quarterbacks Trevor Harris of the Toronto Argonauts and Mike Reilly of the Edmonton Eskimos.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CSA weighing up bid for men's 2026 World Cup

SOCCER

Contributing factor is success of this year's women's event

After successfully hosting two major women's soccer tournaments over the last couple of years, the Canadian Soccer Association is now giving serious consideration to bidding for the next FIFA World Cup.

"I think our next project as a country, and as a soccer country, would be the men's World Cup," Victor Montagliani, the CSA's president, told a news conference Thursday.

"We have hosted every other World Cup. We have been successful at every other one we have hosted. I think it's a natural progression for us to seriously look at bidding for the men's World Cup."

The CSA released figures Thursday showing the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup and 2014 U-20 Women's World Cup created a combined $493.6 million in economic activity. That exceeded the preliminary projections of $337 million made in February 2014.

The cost for the two tournaments was $216 million. They generated $249 million in net economic activity with $97.6 million in tax revenues, the association said. Montagliani couldn't immediately say how much economic activity the tournaments generated individually.

This year's women's World Cup was held between June 6 and July 5. The 24-team tournament played games in venues at Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal and Moncton, N.B.

A crowd of 53,341 watched the U.S. defeat Japan 5-2 in the final at BC Place Stadium in Vancouver. Overall the tournament's 52 games attracted 1,353,506 fans for an average attendance of 26,029.

The CSA says more than 84,000 visitors made one or more day trips while 174,000 visitors made an overnight visit to one of the host cities. A total of 96,000 American fans crossed the border.

The U-20 Women's World Cup was held Aug. 5 to Aug. 24 in Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton. In the past Canada has hosted the 2002 FIFA U-19 Women's World Cup and the 2007 U-20 Men's World Cup.

The 2018 World Cup is scheduled for Russia and the 2022 competition in Qatar.

Montagliani said it's expected the 2026 World Cup would be awarded to the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean (CONCACAF), of which Canada is a member.

"It's kind of expected it should come this way," he said. "They usually award World Cups an average of eight years before." THE CANADIAN PRESS

USA's Megan Rapinoe with the trophy AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Canada's Christine Sinclair celebrates scoring in the World Cup quarter-final with England. The event was more beneficial to the economy than was expected. BEN NELMS/GETTY IMAGES

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L	Z	F	F	T	A	E	B	U	E	I
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C	X	U	I	F	G	T	P	D	E	S
E	M	N	C	Z	F	A	A	M	R	T
R	E	L	A	X	E	D	P	B	I	I
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COMFORTABLE CONFIDENT DETERMINED EXCITED
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OMG: 25-HOUR MARATHON LAUNCH FOR TBS COMEDY SERIES

Rashida Jones. GETTY IMAGES

The TBS comedy Angie Tribeca is getting a launch even NASA might envy.

Starring Rashida Jones in the title role, the zany police procedural will let viewers binge-watch its entire first season by airing all 10 half-hour episodes from start to finish not once, but five times in a row, commercial-free. This 25-hour marathon begins Sunday, Jan. 17. Then on Monday, Jan. 25, TBS will begin rolling out what it calls the series' "second" season — 10 more half-hours that will air weekly.

The series follows a squad of LAPD detectives who investigate cases ranging from the murder of a ventriloquist to a rash of baker suicides.

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Keith
Financial Services Manager
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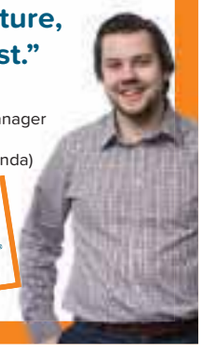

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
Push yourself forward and show the world what you are capable of. Today's Sun-Pluto link will make you more ambitious than usual, so any opportunities that come your way will be gratefully received, and used.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Others can wallow in self-pity but you will keep a positive attitude. If bad news arrives from out of the blue today stay focused on what needs to get done.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Don't keep your hopes and dreams to yourself. The more people understand what it is you are hoping to achieve the more likely it is you will get assistance from them.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
It may feel as if you have a mountain to climb, and maybe you have, but don't doubt that you will reach the top. You have what it takes to succeed and you have powerful people on your side. Use them.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Look ahead and getting ready to meet the challenges that you know are coming your way. Plan your strategy in as much detail as possible.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Don't take anything too seriously and don't get angry with people who seem to think the world is coming to an end. There is a lot of hysteria at the moment, but you don't have to join in the stupidity.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Someone who can usually be counted on to support you with no questions asked will wonder aloud today if you know what you are doing. You do. Ask them why they no longer have faith in you.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
If you push yourself beyond your usual limits you will find your second wind and overcome challenges with ease. You know what needs to be done and you can manage it.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You are acting suspiciously. Others think you have something to hide. Whatever your secret, they will find out sooner or later. Why not confess and get it over with?

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Not everyone can be as confident and adventurous as you, so make allowances for those who don't want to follow your lead. A little caution might be a good thing. This is not a day to take too many risks.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Get yourself noticed. If you are a typical Aquarius you don't really care what other people think of you but it's in your interests now to at least look as if you do.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Money worries have caused you a lot of sleepless nights but it won't be long before your financial problems are solved. That is not an excuse to go on yet another spending binge.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

	8	5	9				6	7
7	4	1			6			
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RECIPE Roasted Dijon Chicken

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This cosy dinner is the perfect way to end the week. It's in the oven just long to whip of some mashed potatoes to serve with it.

Ready in
Prep time: 20 minutes
Serves 4

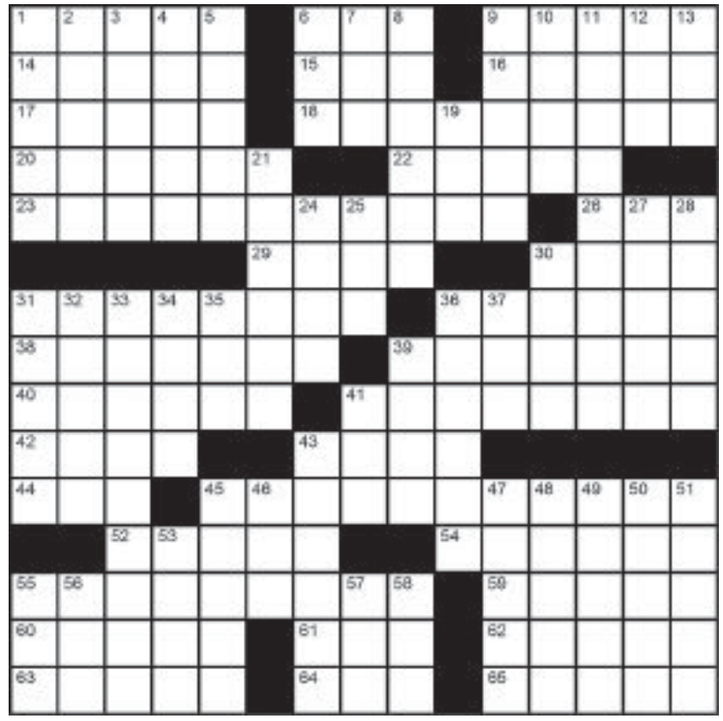
Ingredients
- 6 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tsp oil
- 1 minced shallot
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup apple cider
- 1/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth

Directions
1. Preheat oven to 425 F. Generously season chicken with salt and pepper.
2. Add oil to a large oven-safe skillet over medium heat. Add chicken and cook for 10 minutes (the meat will not be cooked through).
3. Transfer the skillet to the oven. Roast until chicken is cooked through, about 6-8 minutes.
4. Transfer chicken pieces to a platter. Return skillet to medium heat and add shallots and garlic; cook for about 1 minute. Whisk in Dijon mustard, apple cider, broth and a bit more salt and pepper; cook for about 3 minutes. Return chicken to skillet along with juices that have settled on the platter to rewarm. Serve with our favourite sides.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Building's construction details, commonly
6. Initials-sharers of Jane Eyre's author
9. "..._ _ goes something like this..." (Singer's intro for the song)
14. _-eyed
15. Sales pro
16. Ms. Carter of country tunes
17. Amber, for example
18. Like the still-there pile that still hasn't been taken away
20. Zoroastrianism sacred texts
22. Still _ _ (Maya Angelou poem)
23. Senate of Canada... Creature which is one of the symbols on the coffered ceiling of The Red Chamber: 2 wds.
26. Rapscallion
29. Mistake-maker's reaction
30. Triad
31. Moustache-growing fundraising month
36. Fierce frowns
38. Ticklish music keys
39. Gooey/gravy fries order in Canada
40. : ...and : : :
41. Formally called forth
42. Tosses out
43. Celebrity
44. Sort of salute
45. Green-headed bird commemorated as a roadside attraction in the Village of Andrew in Alberta: 2 wds.
52. Leisurely walk along
54. Console
55. One might require you to fast ahead of time: 2 wds.
59. Insert
60. Trunk
61. "Hurray!"
62. Scoundrel's smile
63. Naomi of "King Kong" (2005)
64. Undercover agent
65. Dawdle

DOWN
1. Barnyard bedding
2. Vex
3. Art studio stand
4. Illusionist Mr. Angel
5. New Wave band's piano, for short
6. French vineyard
7. Mr. Stiller
8. Parsley amounts
9. _. Assistant (Office gig)
10. Modernists
11. Thunder Bay born member of downhill skiing's famous 'Crazy Canucks': 2 wds.
12. 'Serpent' suffix
13. Little bit
19. 'Ranch' suffix
21. Sun-dried bricks
24. Egg masses
25. Umbrella mo.
27. Last name of Kanga's creator
28. Modelled
30. L. Frank Baum dog
31. Super tiny
32. Egg-shaped
33. Lord _ (J.K. Rowling villain)
34. Cupid's Greek counterpart
35. Maximum opp.
36. Infomercial pioneer Suzanne
37. Magna _ laude
39. Athletic brand
41. "My Gal _" (1942)
43. Philadelphia players
45. Early platform for PCs
46. At the age of, in Latin [abbr.]
47. Bible-sounding verb
48. "Last Dance" singer Ms. Summer
49. Speak
50. Support the sport with a shout!
51. John _, U.S. Secretary of State
53. Jacob van _ the Elder (Flemish painter)
55. "One more thing..." on the Web
56. Mauna _ (Hawaiian volcano)
57. Devitalize
58. Posh-style 'your'

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